

SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES

It is not uncommon for school personnel to help in the diagnosis of diabetes. The symptoms for uncontrolled or untreated diabetes are often the same.

Type I or insulin-dependent diabetes usually develops in children and young adults, but can occur at any age. This form of diabetes, also known as juvenile diabetes, results from the destruction of the body's insulin-producing cells. In these individuals, insulin injections are needed to help convert food (or sugar) into energy. The symptoms of untreated or uncontrolled insulin-dependent diabetes are: frequent urination, unusual thirst/excessive drinking of fluids, rapid weight loss, weakness, irritability and/or nausea, infections or sores which are slow to heal and unusual or uncontrollable cravings for food.

Type II or adult onset diabetes results from the partial deficiency in the natural insulin supply as well as from the body's inability to respond adequately to insulin. This form of diabetes usually develops in adults and can typically be managed with exercise, diet, and/or oral medications. However, in some cases insulin injections may be necessary.

GENERAL ADVICE

Diabetes is most effectively managed by constantly balancing the amounts and times of insulin injections, food and activity. If schedules are changed, adjustments in these three components will be necessary. Since exercise will lower blood sugar levels, it is advised that physical education classes be scheduled at the beginning of the school day or after lunch. Many children with diabetes require additional nourishment before strenuous exercise. Teachers and/or nurses should have candy and/or other forms of sugar on hand to treat insulin reactions. School personnel are encouraged to treat insulin reactions immediately.

A diabetic coma is a serious complication of diabetes which can result from prolonged high blood sugar or illness. This condition **Does Not** occur suddenly and generally, should not impact school personnel. However, if the student is experiencing the extreme symptoms of uncontrolled or untreated diabetes, these warning signs should be reported to the parent or physician: frequent urination, extreme thirsts and fatigue and/or unusual breath odor.

The guidelines listed herein are general and because every student with diabetes is unique he/she may require more or less supervision. The parent and teacher need to discuss the student's individuality and obtain all pertinent information at the beginning of the school year.

STUDENT'S INFORMATION

Student's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Contact in case of Emergency _____

Relationship _____ Phone Number _____

Name of Physician _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Signs/symptoms which student usually exhibits during an insulin reaction: _____

Time of day reaction is most likely to occur: _____

Most effective treatment: _____

Type of morning or afternoon snack: _____

Will student be monitoring blood sugar at school? _____ At what times? _____

Is supervision required? _____

For further information contact:
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IMPORTANT FACTS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL ABOUT DIABETES



**Diabetes
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*Supporting the work of the
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WHO SHOULD READ THIS AND WHY

It is vital that **All School Personnel** have some basic knowledge about diabetes and which students have diabetes. Teachers, nurses, counselors, lunchroom staff, playground instructors, hall supervisors and bus drivers should be knowledgeable about the basic facts of diabetes care and what to do in case of an emergency.

WHAT IS DIABETES

Diabetes is not an infectious disease. It results from the body's inability to produce or effectively use insulin. Insulin is needed to help convert sugar or food into energy. Although diabetes cannot be cured, it can be controlled through the use of insulin injections, a prescribed meal plan and exercise. Students with diabetes can participate in all school activities, and should not be excluded due to their diabetes. Every student, however, does have individualized needs. It is essential for school personnel to meet with the parents of children with diabetes to obtain more detailed information about each student's abilities and requirements. Communication and cooperation between the parents, students and school personnel can help each student have a positive and productive school experience.

INSULIN REACTIONS

Insulin reactions (hypoglycemia) occurs when the amount of sugar in the blood is **Too Low**. This can be caused by an imbalance of insulin, omission of a prescribed meal or extraordinary activity with too little food. Under these circumstances the body usually sends out warning signs which, if recognized early, can be treated with any form of sugar. Insulin reactions can occur in any patient with insulin dependent diabetes and is not necessarily a result of carelessness. Insulin reactions are easily treated, however, if a reaction is not treated, unconsciousness or convulsions may result. In many cases, the student will be able to recognize the warning signs, and should be encouraged to report them to the appropriate person for immediate treatment. However, some students may not be capable of identifying the insulin reaction and will require immediate assistance from school personnel.

COMMON WARNING SIGNS OF INSULIN REACTIONS

Students may experience one or more of these symptoms that cannot otherwise be explained:

- Trembling
- Blurred Vision
- Poor Coordination
- Perspiration
- Irritability
- Abdominal Pain
- Pallor
- Crying
- Nausea
- Headache
- Confusion
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Lack of Concentration
- Nervousness
- Fatigue
- Unusual Actions/Responses

TREATMENT OF INSULIN REACTIONS

1. At the **FIRST SIGN** of any of the warning signs, give sugar **IMMEDIATELY** in One of the following forms:
SUGAR – 5 small cubes, 2 packets or 2 teaspoons
FRUIT JUICE – 1/2 or 2/3 cup
SOFT DRINK – (NOT diet or sugarless) 6 ounces
CANDY – 1/4 to 1/3 candy bar
2. The student experiencing the insulin reaction may need coaxing or help to eat or drink.
3. If no improvement is seen within 15-20 minutes, repeat the feeding. If the student does not improve, the parents or physician should be called.
4. If the insulin reaction occurs more than one hour before the next regular meal, the student should be given additional food such as 1/2 sandwich and a glass of milk.
5. Regular activities may be resumed after the reaction is treated and symptoms have disappeared.
6. Insulin reactions should not occur frequently and parents should be advised of them.

PLEASE NOTE: Insulin reactions will not improve without treatment. The student must eat or drink food containing sugar.

STUDENT'S DIET

Students with diabetes should follow a prescribed meal plan and may select their foods from the school lunch menu or bring their own lunch to school. Lunchroom staff should be aware of the student's dietary needs, which may include midmorning or midafternoon snacks to help avoid insulin reactions. The student's diet is an essential component of his or her diabetes management plan. Adequate time should be provided for meals and snacks. Special occasions, such as school parties, can be planned for in advance. For example, extra insulin or increased physical activity can compensate for extra food.

BLOOD TESTING

Many individuals with diabetes are encouraged to monitor their own blood sugar levels. To effectively control their diabetes, it may be necessary for a student to check his or her blood sugar several times a day.